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THE GRANT MONUMENT DESIGNS.

CERTAIN of the designs approved by the Executive Committee of the Grant Monument Association have been exhibited during the last few days at Ortgies's Gallery in Fifth Avenue. The design by Mr. J. H. Duncan, which has been awarded first place, is, on the whole, worthy of the occasion. In the present state of matters architectural it is perhaps inevitable that for a national monument one must resort to accepted masterpieces of the past for inspiration. Waiving the important question whether an American hero must needs be commemorated by a monument Classic in idea and French in expression, it may be conceded that the Pantheon at Rome and the mausoleum of the First Napoleon at Paris are worthy models to follow. Mr. Duncan has caught the large dignity of well arranged masses absolutely essential to such a work. So thoroughly is this evident in the whole of the design for the monument, that the equestrian statue of the hero himself seems to be almost an after-thought, or at least a mere incident that might be omitted with no injury to the effect of the façade. Objections might also be raised to the weak composition of the group on the centre of the pediment of the first story, and the tripods which flank the cornice on either side. No doubt the desire to obtain the effect of supreme stability led the architect to discard the dome for a pyramidal cone of stone. When in position this would probably be extremely heavy in effect—even the dome of the "Invalides" had to be gilded to relieve its crushing mass. A sketch of the portion that could be carried out with the funds in hand raises grave doubts of the monument being ever completed without much modification. National enthusiasm is apt to lag, and the difficulty of re-arousing interest in a scheme of this sort is one that should be seriously considered. The unfinished Scott memorial that disfigures Edinburgh, is one fatally conspicuous instance of the folly shown in commencing memorials on a scale greater than the liberality of the public can complete before the scheme has lost its freshness.

Mr. Clinton's design, while lacking the severe importance of the successful one, has yet much that is charming in its graceful composition and elegant ornament, and would be an edifice that might do honor to any site. Mr. John Ords's composition is curiously infelicitous, the four huge apsidal domes grouping awkwardly with the four pyramidal roofs around the central dome. The design of Messrs. N. Le Brun & Sons is singularly ineffective in its elevation and grouping, but the interior arrangements are worthy of careful study.

TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

IN order to make the Correspondence Department of The Art Amateur as valuable as possible to our readers, we have decided to try the experiment of answering every query of urgent importance *as quickly as possible, by mail direct*, instead of through the columns of the magazine only. For this we shall make no charge. We only ask that the questions may be written as clearly and concisely as the case allows. We have always regretted not being able to meet our readers oftener than once a month. In this regard we hope to put ourselves on the footing not only of a monthly but even of a *daily* adviser in all that pertains to art in the home.

NOTICE TO ART TEACHERS.

THE ART AMATEUR will begin shortly the publication of a carefully considered series of papers on the art schools and academies of the United States and Canada, with a critical examination of their methods of teaching; illustrated with views of classrooms (antique, modelling, anatomical, etc.), showing in many cases the students at work, and giving portraits of art directors and teachers. Selections for reproduction in The Art Amateur will be made from the best of the students' drawings submitted. As it is hoped to cover every school of importance, it is urgently requested that principals will lose no time in communicating at once with the publisher, with a view to having their schools or classes adequately represented in these articles. The opening papers, at least, of the series will be by Professor Ernest Knaufft, author of "Pen Drawing for Photo-Engraving" and of a series on Freehand Drawing, to begin shortly.

ART IN BOSTON.

THE ART MUSEUM SCHOOL'S GREAT LOSS—THE LATE OTTO GRÜNDMANN—THE STATE SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF BAD PUBLIC SCULPTURE—KITSON'S FINE STATUE OF FARRAGUT—MISS RUGGLES' PARIS TRIUMPH—DALLIN'S RETURN TO BOSTON.

THE death of Otto Gründmann, the head of the Art Museum School of Drawing and Painting, has given a shock to the art fraternity. He was known to be suffering from an affection of the eyes and from nervous prostration, both of which were considered results of his severe suffering with "la grippe" during the winter. But it appears from the circumstances of his death (August 27th) among his relatives in Germany, that he was the victim of a disease of the kidneys. Gründmann came to us in 1875, at the suggestion of Mr. Frank D. Millet, who was then one of the directors of the Art Museum, and had been deputed to select a proper superintendent for the school of drawing and painting which had been resolved upon. Millet and Gründmann had been fellow-students at Antwerp. The selection was an eminently judicious one. An artist of no mean accomplishments, Gründmann was, moreover, a born teacher, gifted with the finest qualities of sympathy, patience, insight and honesty. He kept constantly before his pupils the higher standards and principles of art, never applauding the merely smart performance, or permitting the fashion of the hour or sensational success to dazzle them or divert them from serious work. He laid the foundations for the love and knowledge of art broad and deep, upon the eternal principles of beauty and purity, truth and dignity, as exemplified in classic art, and in works of the old masters. This was plainly the conscientious course for an instructor of youth and the responsible head of an institution to pursue; but he followed it besides from the instinctive bent of his sincere, loyal, reverent nature. Had his devotion to the conservative in criticism, style and execution been mere posing, or been due to stupid insensibility to the new forms that have come into vogue, the cant or the stupidity would have been made ridiculous by the numerous clever followers of the new Parisian ways among Boston artists and amateurs. But, though the attack upon him as a "German professor" was promptly and publicly delivered by some of the returning young converts to the Paris modes, fired with the convert's fanaticism; Gründmann never lost the sincere respect even of his opponents. And if he sometimes complained in private that he felt the tide running against him; here in Boston, he was conscious of the support of the best connoisseurs, who came to regard him as of an elder and more earnest school, safer "to tie to," and sounder to depend upon in the laying of the foundations of a school of art, than the most brilliant of the flashing meteors of the latest style. Plain and modest to the last degree in his personal manners, he was lifted to his position by the dignity of his devotion to noble ideals, and his utter genuineness and freedom from affectation. His own portrait work had the elevation of another time and atmosphere than ours, together with the most admirable technique, and will be an abiding testimony of his ability and character. The accounts of the public funeral given him in his native city, Meissen, near Dresden, show that though he must have left there when a mere youth, he was not without honor in his own country. But from his shrinking abhorrence of all self-praise and display, one would never have been permitted to suspect that he had been held in such consideration. Still, he was a marked man in any company, and even on the street, whether in Boston, or London, or Paris, with his fine, serious face, his genuinely artistic tangle of fair hair, and his broad-rimmed Vandyck hat, worn with no vanity or affectation, but as a necessary expression of his natural self—the artist in every fibre of his being, single-minded, "pure and simple."

Boston has again taken the lead in American evolution by framing and enacting a law, which has already been put into execution with good effect. This attempts to save our growing ambitious municipalities from erecting statues that are bad art and unworthy of their purpose. A most outrageous little granite statue of an Irish militia volunteer colonel (the work of a graveyard stonemason, but hardly fit for a mortuary emblem, as its first and inevitable effect upon the observer is to make him laugh) erected in the Public Garden, with the support and approval of the Mayor and Aldermen, was what finally brought this project

of law to realization. The new law was too late to prevent this absurd curio's mounting its pedestal in testimony of our constant peril from the good citizens who "don't know anything about art, but know what they like." But nothing more in the nature of art can go up in any public place in Boston, nor upon any public building, without the approval and assent of the State Art Commission created by this act. My letters have often, and for a long time, pleaded for such a commission, and not only in these columns but elsewhere have I argued its imperative necessity. It must be admitted, however, that the Massachusetts Legislature has hit upon a happier contrivance for preventing bad art, and at the same time satisfying the popular mind with the surrender of its prerogative to have "what it likes," than any that has occurred heretofore to the most strenuous advocates, among artists, of an Art Commission. All previous plans have been open to the objection—a very valid one, as candid artists will agree—that the artists of an art commission would be likely to consider the artistic end more than the public motive, would be "cliquey," if not hopelessly quarrelsome, and would not be in touch with the plain people. And yet the judgment of artists is what is necessary to prevent poor art discrediting us. Now, how does the new law meet all this? By providing a continuing commission composed ex-officio of the most acceptable dignitaries, the Mayor, the Librarian of the Public Library, the President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, and the President of the Society of Architects, and permitting them to call in the aid of a committee of artistic experts, artists or other, in making up their opinion. In practice, it was found in the one case thus far passed upon by the Art Commission, that the respectable and intelligent gentlemen composing the Commission preferred to rely upon the experts, though they agreed at once among themselves in favor of the statue whose model was under consideration. So a committee of three experts, headed by the curator of classic statuary at the Art Museum, was appointed to visit the sculptor's studio, when after certain suggestions had been offered by the committee and accepted by the sculptor, and the trifling changes carried out in the clay, the statue was officially approved by the unanimous vote of the Art Commission. Now, then, everybody is bound to be satisfied, artists and lay public, the connoisseurs and the multitude, for have not all had, representatively, a hand in the choosing of the model? It is an immense relief to possess such a guarantee and safeguard, and it is difficult to see how it can ever fail to work well. The general good taste, culture and public spirit of such an ex-officio board can be depended on from year to year, no matter who may be the particular incumbents of the dignified offices designated, and the auxiliary special committee of artists or other experts called in to advise them, will assure the Commission the benefit of good professional judgments, while either element will act as check and balance upon the other.

It is the municipal statue of Farragut which has been passed upon by the Art Commission as above narrated. The contract was awarded last winter, after the usual smart struggle, to Henry H. Kitson; but the defeated competitors managed somehow to have the contract delayed until the Art Commission bill had been drawn, passed and become a law. But this commission, so far from putting a defeat upon Kitson, has crowned him with its unique honor. The model is a very striking and vivacious, yet dignified and imposing, study of the Admiral. He stands with one foot advanced, and with the traditional wave in his front coat-skirt. An animated, slight turning of his head, a sharp compressing of his lips and an eagle glance of his eye, give the whole great force and lifelikeness, and from every point of view this quiet dramatic intensity is felt the same. There is more life even in the back of this model than in most heroic statues, and, I am inclined to believe, more of Farragut in it than even in the rather well talked-up Farragut of St. Gaudens. For the likeness is excellent, and the artist has had the benefit of the descriptions of personal friends of the Admiral, whose nervous little figure was familiar on our streets, and has skilfully managed to convey the truth without loss of dignity or the heroic size.

In Mr. Kitson's studio just now are the plaster casts of those remarkable bronzes which won "mention honorable" at the last Salon for his precocious Boston pupil, Miss Theo Ruggles, who is also to be seen there